

Message Text

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15

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SUBJECT: PSI PROVINCIAL SECY'S VIEWS MILAN POLITICAL SITUATION

1. IN CONVERSATION WITH CONOFF, LUIGI VERTEMATI, PSI PROVINCIAL SECRETARY FOR MILAN, SAID THAT THE PSI HAD CHOSEN TO GO INTO CO-ALITION WITH THE PCI IN MANY CASES BECAUSE THE DC WOULD NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE GIUNTA FORMATION PROCESS. HE ADMITTED, HOWEVER, THAT THIS WAS BECAUSE THE PSI WOULD HAVE FORCED THE DC INTO COALITION WITH THE PCI WHICH WAS UNACCEPTABLE TO THE DC. VERTEMATI SAID THE MOMENTUM TOWARD THE LEFT IN THE PERIPHERY OF MILAN WAS SUCH THAT THE PSI SIMPLY COULD NOT REMAIN IN CENTER-LEFT GOVERNMENTS AND SURVIVE. HE RECOGNIZED THE RISK OF GOING WITH THE PCI BUT SAID IT WAS A RISK THEY HAD HAD TO TAKE.

2. IN THE CITY OF MILAN, THE PSI ESTIMATED BEFORE JUNE 15 THAT IT HAD A STRONG ENOUGH ESTABLISHMENT AND POWERFUL ENOUGH FIGURES TO WITHSTAND PCI PRESSURE TO TAKE OVER AND TO MAINTAIN ITS OWN LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM. UNTIL NOW, THIS HAS TURNED OUT TO BE CORRECT. IN THE PERIPHERY, HOWEVER, THE PSI HAD REALIZED IT DID NOT HAVE THE RESOURCES TO MAINTAIN ITS INDEPENDENCE, BUT IT HAD HOPED TO HAVE A BREATHING SPELL AT LEAST UNTIL THE END OF THE YEAR BEFORE THEY BEGAN TO FEEL THE FULL FORCE OF THE PCI WEIGHT. THIS HAS NOT BEEN TRUE AND PSI IS ALREADY UNDER PRESSURE.

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3. VERTEMATI CONCURRED THAT THE DC HAD HELD WHAT IT HAD

ALREADY HAD IN THE JUNE 15 ELECTIONS BUT FAILED TO WIN A PROPORTIONATE SHARE OF THE NEW VOTES IN THE PROVINCE. HE DID NOT FORESEE FUTURE SHIFTS OF THE KIND THAT OCCURRED IN THE REGIONAL ELECTIONS.

4. VERTEMATI SEES THE PSI LONG-TERM ROLE TO BE A CLASSIC BALANCING POSITION BETWEEN THE TWO MAIN PARTIES. THE PCI CAN ONLY HOPE TO GET THE VOTES OF THE NON-CATHOLIC LAY PART OF THE POPULATION WHICH WOULD AT MOST AMOUNT TO SOMEWHERE AROUND 20 PERCENT. IN PRACTICE, THE PSI SHARE OF THIS SECTOR OF THE POPULATION WILL BE MUCH LESS. THUS, THE PSI CAN NEVER HOPE TO BE A MAJOR POWER ON ITS OWN BUT ONLY TO "CONDITION" THE PLURALITY PARTY. FOR THE MOMENT, THE LATTER IS THE PCI AT LEAST LOCALLY.

5. VERTEMATI BELIEVES THE PCI IS SLOWLY TAKING OVER THE ROLE OF TRADITIONAL FOLK AND CHURCH PUBLIC CELEBRATIONS. THE FESTIVALS OF L'UNITA' WITH THEIR TRATTORIAS, SONG PROGRAMS ETC. FILL A ROLE TRADITIONALLY FILLED BY RELIGIOUS PROCESSIONS AND FESTIVALS (SAGRA)-WHICH, VERTEMATI ADDED, THE FASCIST GOVERNMENT HAD SKILLFULLY EXPLOITED. BERLINGUER MADE A MISTAKE IN HIS SPEECH IN FLORENCE. ITS TRIUMPHANT DEMAGOGIC TONE HAS SHOCKED EVERYONE, INCLUDING THE COMMUNISTS. IT IS TRUE THAT THE PCI IS MOVING TO THE RIGHT, TAKING ON ANTI-INTELLECTUAL OVERTONES AND BECOMING THE PARTY OF LAW AND ORDER NOT ONLY FOR TACTICAL PURPOSES BUT BECAUSE ITS PHILOSOPHY IS EVOLVING IN THIS DIRECTION. HE WOULD NOT RULE OUT THE LONG-TERM POSSIBILITY OF AN EVOLUTION SUCH AS THE NATIONAL SOCIALIST PARTY WENT THROUGH IN GERMANY IN THE 1930'S. HE BELIEVES THE MOST IMMEDIATE THREAT IS THE ITALIAN TENDENCY TO JUMP ON THE BANDWAGON OF THOSE IN-OR POTENTIALLY IN-POWER. THE PCI IS NOW IN FASHION AND THIS COULD BRING IT SIGNIFICANT STRENGTH IN THE NEXT POLITICAL ELECTIONS.FINA

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